NPS Form 10-900
Oct. 1990

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER
LISTED

JUN 27 2007

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A) Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-9000a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Berger House

Other name/site number Abilene Lustron House; 041-0020-0107

2. Location

Street & number 208 N. E. 12th Street ☐ not for publication

City or town Abilene ☐ vicinity

State Kansas Code KS County Dickinson Code 041 Zip code 67410

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Patrick Zollner DSHPO 5/4/07

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Kansas State Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional Comments.)

Signature of commenting official /Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I herby certify that the property is — Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other, (explain:)

Berger House
Name of Property

Dickinson County, Kansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- [x] private
- [ ] public-local
- [ ] public-State
- [ ] public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- [x] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	1	total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Lustron Houses of Kansas MPS

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter Categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single dwelling
DOMESTIC: Secondary structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT
NO STYLE

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: CONCRETE
Walls: METAL: Steel
METAL: Aluminum
Roof: METAL: Steel
Other:

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Berger House
Name of Property

Dickinson County, Kansas
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register

- ☐ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from it original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1949

Significant Dates

1949

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Bechman, Morris H. (architect)

Lifetime Homes, Inc. (builder)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of repository:

Dickinson County Historical Society

Berger House
Name of Property

Dickinson County, Kansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	14	655060	4309980
2			
3			
4			

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title Nanc Scholl

Organization N/A Date 1 September 2006

Street & number 813 N. Olive Street Telephone (785) 263-7012

City or town Abilene State KS Zip code 67410

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

Name Greg and Ann Rose

Street & number 1114 N. Olive Street Telephone (785) 263-7858

City or town Abilene State KS Zip code 67410

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16) U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Berger House (c. 1949) is located at 208 N. E. 12th Street just one-and-a-half blocks east of Abilene's main north-south thoroughfare – K-15 or Buckeye Avenue – and about one mile south of Interstate 70. This north-facing Lustron house sits on a small lot with a modest, cultivated lawn that is bordered on the east by an alley. A small greenhouse (c. 1974) is attached to the structure at the rear southwest corner. There is a non-historic one-car metal garage located immediately southeast of the house and alongside the alley. Of the 91 extant Lustron houses in Kansas surveyed in 1999, 68 were Westchester Deluxe two-bedroom models.[1] The Berger House, with its "Maize Yellow" exterior, its "Dove Gray" roof tiles, and its two bedrooms, falls into this category. The one-story metal home is situated on a cement slab foundation and features approximately 1,000 square feet. Its serial number is 02-727. The house is in excellent condition and retains its unique character-defining features.

Exterior

The Berger House features a side-gabled plan with asymmetrical elevations. The steel framing is enclosed by steel panels covered on both sides with a permanent porcelain enamel finish. These interlocking 24" by 24" square panels clad the exterior and portions of the interior. Window configurations on the primary elevation and portions of the secondary elevations include tripartite bays with four-light aluminum casements flanking a larger single-light fixed pane. The remaining secondary and tertiary windows feature three-light casements arranged singly or in pairs. There is also chimney that is clad in yellow-colored metal panels.

North (front) Elevation

There is a recessed front porch at the structure's northeast corner. The entrance to the home is through an east-facing single steel door. The north (front) elevation contains two tripartite windows with four-light casements flanking a larger single-light fixed pane. The main tripartite bay projects slightly from the façade and is accentuated by gray-colored steel paneling.

East (side) Elevation

The driveway and non-historic garage are situated next to the east side of the house and provides easy access to the east-facing front door. The east elevation is dominated by the recessed front porch and a tripartite window with four-light casements flanking a larger single-light fixed pane. This window also features a metal awning. The gable end projects slightly from the wall plane and is clad in white metal panels. White metal panels also clad the ceiling of the porch ceiling.

South (rear) Elevation

A single steel door topped by a metal awning is located at the center of the rear elevation and leads into the kitchen and utility room. There is a three-light casement window to the left of the door and a double

[1] Elizabeth Rosin, "Lustron Houses of Kansas." National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form. P. E-14. December 6, 2000. Filed at the Kansas State Historical Society.

three-light casement window to the right. A clear greenhouse structure was added in 1974 to the rear elevation at the southwest corner. It encloses a tripartite window with four-light casements flanking a larger single-light fixed pane.

West (side) Elevation

The west elevation features two double three-light casement windows. Like the east elevation, the gable end projects slightly from the wall plane and is clad in white metal panels.

Interior

The Berger House is comprised of a living room, dining area, kitchen, utility room, bathroom, two bedrooms, and closet spaces. The open plan features common living spaces that flow into each other. Some of the interior walls, including the kitchen, utility room, and bathroom, are clad with the same interlocking 24" by 24" square yellow panels that clad the exterior. The remaining interior walls are clad with light gray enameled steel panels with either a smooth surface or vertical ribbing. All of the interior wall corners are rounded and create a clean "streamlined" look with uncluttered lines and a lack of ornamentation. All of the sliding cabinet, closet, and vanity doors have centered vertical sculptured lines. This design is also found on the broom cabinet door in the utility room. The floors were originally asphalt tile over a concrete slab. The tile has been replaced with wall-to-wall carpeting with the exception of the bathroom, which has linoleum tile flooring. The ceiling is clad with interlocking 24" by 24" square white panels. Smooth gray metal trim accents the doors and windows.

Through the front door one enters the living room. The living room walls clad with light gray, 2' x 8' vertical enameled-steel panels with vertical ribbing. On the west wall is a built-in metal bookcase with shelves flanking a larger display area. Above and below this built-in feature are wider vertical panels. A tripartite window with four-light casements flanking a larger single-light fixed pane dominates the north wall of the living room.

Along the east side of the house and to the south of the living room is the dining area. These wall surfaces are formed of light gray, two-by-eight enameled-steel smooth panels. Hanging high on the wall next to the front door is the original doorbell chime – it is not functional. There is a tripartite window with four-light casements flanking a larger single-light fixed pane on the east wall. Separating the dining area from the kitchen is a floor-to-ceiling metal cabinet unit consisting of cabinets, shelves, drawers, and an open pass-through. These metal storage units feature vertical and horizontal ribbing. All of the doors and drawers have recessed pulls.

The kitchen is located at the southeast corner of the house. A cabinet unit backs the dining room cabinet with three sliding doors on the upper section. Below the pass-though counter is a stack of four metal drawers and two sliding door cabinets. There is an exhaust fan on the east wall. The south wall of the kitchen includes a stove, countertops and cabinets with sliding doors, kitchen sink (not original), and a refrigerator. There is a double three-light casement window above the kitchen sink. All of the sliding cabinet doors have vertical ribbing centered on the doors, as in the dining room cabinet. Lustron houses were equipped with the latest appliances when they were built in the late 1940s. This house originally

boasted a Lustron Automatic dishwasher, which doubled as a clothes washer. The appliance was removed from the kitchen at an unknown date.

A rear door on the south side of the house enters into the kitchen and utility room. Like the kitchen, the utility room walls are clad with 24" by 24" yellow metal panels. These flush-mounted removable panels conceal the electrical circuit breaker, plumbing hook-ups, and telephone lines. The space also houses the washer and dryer. The original furnace has been replaced.

The bathroom and two bedrooms are located on the west side of the house and are accessed through a hallway at the center of the house off the living room. The entryways to these three rooms feature steel enameled sliding pocket doors, which provide privacy while conserving space needs. There is no protruding hardware on these doors. A wooden swinging door has been installed at the bathroom entrance, but the sliding pocket door remains intact. The hallway features a floor-to-ceiling coat closet with sliding doors accentuated by vertical ribbing.

Before entering into the bathroom on the south side of the hallway is a linen closet with shelves. The bathroom retains some original features including a three-drawer cabinet. A modern mirrored medicine cabinet is attached to the wall above it. The stool and sink are located next to the bathtub, which is situated along the south wall. There is a three-light casement window on the south wall above the bathtub. The walls of the bathroom are clad in 24" by 24" yellow metal tiles.

The master bedroom is located at the northwest corner of the house. The north wall features a centered tripartite window with four-light casements flanking a larger single-light fixed pane. The west wall contains a smaller double three-light casement window. Floor-to-ceiling closets flank a built-in vanity along the east wall of the bedroom. The vanity is centered on this wall and features a mirror and three drawers on each side of the seating area. This vanity unit is highlighted with horizontal and vertical ribbings and recessed door and drawer pulls. Additional floor-to-ceiling closet space is located along the south wall of the bedroom.

The second bedroom is located at the southwest corner of the house. There is a tripartite window with four-light casements flanking a larger single-light fixed pane centered on the south wall and a smaller double three-light casement window on the west wall. There is a floor-to-ceiling closet located at the northwest corner of the room. Access to the closet is from the south.

Summary

The entire interior and exterior of the Berger House is covered with porcelain enameled steel panels. This includes the roof shingles, roof overhang materials, gable ends, and exterior wall coverings. The exterior doors are also finished in the same manner with glass panel inserts. The Berger House retains the distinct characteristics and feeling of a Lustron house.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Berger House (c. 1949) is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for its architectural significance as one of fewer than 100 extant Lustron houses in Kansas. It retains its character-defining architectural elements, including its steel framing and cladding and aluminum casement windows, and therefore meets the registration requirements for Lustron houses as outlined in the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) "Lustron Houses of Kansas." According to the MPDF, "the all-steel framing and cladding of a Lustron House made a fairly traditional post-war residential design unique, and it is the retention of the basic design and materials that give these dwellings their distinct feeling and distinguish their architectural integrity."[2]

Historic Context

During the nineteenth century, prefabrication – as defined by H. Ward Jandl as "the mass productions of interchangeable building parts" – was regarded as a promising industrial solution to an industrial problem: the housing shortage in an increasingly urbanized Europe and United States.[3] But for many years, the challenge defied the world's most respected inventors, architects, and inventors.[4] The Great Depression of the 1930s intensified American resolve to mass-produce houses much as Henry Ford manufactured cars.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, architectural pundits heralded the prefabricated house - particularly the metal house - as the wave of the future. The most famous producer of the prefabricated metal home of the postwar era was the Lustron Corporation, which manufactured an all-steel house that it boasted could be sold for $7,000 (although it turned out to cost $9,000). All interior and exterior surfaces, except for the aluminum window frames, were enameled steel. The radiant heating systems supplied with these houses were satisfactory in moderate climates, but were not adequate for colder temperatures due to the un-insulated concrete slab floors, minimal wall insulation, and single-glazed windows. A skilled crew assembled each house on site using 3, 000 factory-made pieces. The procedure took 350 hours, more than twice the hoped-for time. Eventually, Lustron failed because of its inability to make the project profitable. Although not entirely maintenance free as advertised, owners tended to like the steel buildings.

Postwar homebuyers sought comfort and modernity in a house with contemporary materials, kitchen appliances, bathrooms, heating and cooling systems, insulation, roofing, and windows. Small as they were, these postwar houses were remarkably well constructed and equipped. The manufacturers and

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[2] Rosin, F-23.

[3] H. Ward Jandl, *Yesterday's Houses of Tomorrow: Innovative American Houses, 1850-1950* (Washington, DC: Preservation Press, 1991).

[4] Inventor Thomas Edison produced houses from concrete poured into molds with the hope of mass-production. Architects Walter Gropius and Konrad Wachsman developed a system of interchangeable panels. Inventor Buckminster Fuller produced the Dymaxion House.

builders boasted the latest technology and materials incorporated into these homes – and it was available to the middle class. The houses were billed as "fireproof, decay proof, and termite proof. Owners never had to repaint, redecorate, or re-roof."

After World War II, the Federal Housing Administration encouraged the building and selling of ready-made houses as opposed to custom built homes. Research and subsidies for suitable prefabricated housing received support from Congress beginning in 1946. By the end of the decade prefabricated housing was being developed by nearly 300 firms – three of these, including Carl Strandlund's Lustron Corporation, received direct federal loans.[5] Beginning in 1948, the Lustron Corporation turned out 2,492 affordable units from its expansive Columbus, Ohio, plant before collapsing into bankruptcy and obscurity in 1950. The federal government, bowing to public and political pressure and internal unrest, foreclosed on its loans, and the Lustron Corporations was out of business in June 1950.

Berger House
There were eight Lustron dealers in Kansas – including Smith Implements in Abilene. Known as Lifetime Homes Company, this dealer operated out of the Case Building at 210 ½ Broadway. The Berger House was the first of two Lustron houses to be built in Abilene. The building permit was issued on May 11, 1949, and the house was constructed during the summer of 1949 – the heyday of Lustron construction. The permit says the structure was to be "35 feet wide, 31 feet long and one story high, the estimated cost is $8950 and is to be completed by July 31, 1949." The permit lists Lifetime Homes, Co., and Frank B. Smith as the owner. No garage was built with the house.

Donald M. Berger, the property's first owner, sold it in 1958 to Dora Klover who lived there until her death in 1967. Harold and Mary Durham then acquired the property and lived there for 23 years before selling it to the current owners – Greg and Ann Rose – in 1991.[6]

The Berger House is a Westchester (Model Type 2), which was the most common of the models. The house's serial number is 02-727, which provides the model number (2) and the production number (727). It was the 727th house off the production line out of a total of 2,492.[7]

The second and only other Lustron house to be built in Abilene was constructed between August and September 1949 at 420 N. E. 10th Street. The City issued the building permit on August 25, 1949 – the completion date was listed as September 30, 1949, and the estimated construction cost was $9,500. L. W. and Fern Willis first owned the house. On September 18, 1962, the house was severely damaged by extremely high winds that damaged the roof. After the death of Mr. Willis, Mrs. Willis sold the house in 1985 when she moved to New York to be near her daughter. Dr. Jack M. Mohler purchased the house

[5] Rosin, E-5.
[6] Harold Durham's obituary suggests his mother was Rosa Klover. Durham acquired the property from Dora Klover, who is most likely his aunt.
[7] Like most Lustron houses, the Berger House retains its serial number tag in the utility room.

with the intention of remodeling it for his use as a doctor's office. He eventually demolished the house and constructed a new building shortly thereafter.

Summary

The Berger House is significant under Criterion C as one of the few extant and intact example of a unique post-World War II housing type. The property meets the registration requirements outlined in the MPDF "Lustron Houses of Kansas." The Lustron house combined America's interest in prefabricated housing with the fascination Americans held for new and innovative building technologies. Furthermore, intact Lustron houses such as this provide an important glimpse into American domestic life in the late 1940s.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Asling, Wanda. Telephone interview by author, 2006, Abilene, KS.

City of Abilene, KS, building permits.

Dickinson County Historical Society, Abilene, KS.

Fetters, Thomas. *The Lustron Home: The History of a Postwar Prefabricated Housing Experiment.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2002.

Jandl, H. Ward. *Yesterday's Houses of Tomorrow: Innovative American Homes, 1850 to 1950.* Washington, DC: Preservation Press, 1991.

Kansas Preservation Newsletter. Kansas State Historical Society, Cultural Resources Division., Jan.-Feb. 2001.

Maxwell, Shirley, and James C. Massey. "Postwar and the Cape Cods and Split-Levels of the 1940s. *Old House Journal* (July/August 1992): 55-59.

Rosin, Elizabeth. "Lustron Houses of Kansas." National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form. 6 December 2000. Filed at the Kansas State Historical Society.

Stone, Howard. Telephone interview by author, 2006, Abilene, KS.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property stands on Lot 5, except the W 125 feet thereof, Block 6, Kuney & Hodge's Addition to the City of Abilene, Dickinson County, Kansas. The property is bounded on the south by Lot 5, on the west by the west 125 feet of Lot 5, on the north by 12th Street, and on the east by an alley.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes the entire parcel historically associated with the nominated property.

PHOTOGRAPIC INFORMATION

Property Name: Berger House
Location: 208 NE 12th Street, Abilene, Dickinson County, KS
Photographer: Sarah J. Martin
Date: 30 December 2006

Photo 1: North (front) Elevation and East (side) Elevation, facing SW

Photo 2: North (front) Elevation and East (side) Elevation, facing SW

Photo 3: North (front) Elevation, window close-up, facing S

Photo 4: North (front) Elevation and West (side) Elevation, facing SE

Photo 5: South (Rear) Elevation, facing N

Photo 6: Interior, Living Room and Dining Room, facing SE

Photo 7: Interior, Living Room, facing SW

Photo 8: Interior, Dining Room, built-in cabinets, facing S

Photo 9: Interior, Utility Room and Kitchen, facing S

Photo 10: Interior, Kitchen, facing E

Photo 11: Interior, Hallway Closet, facing W

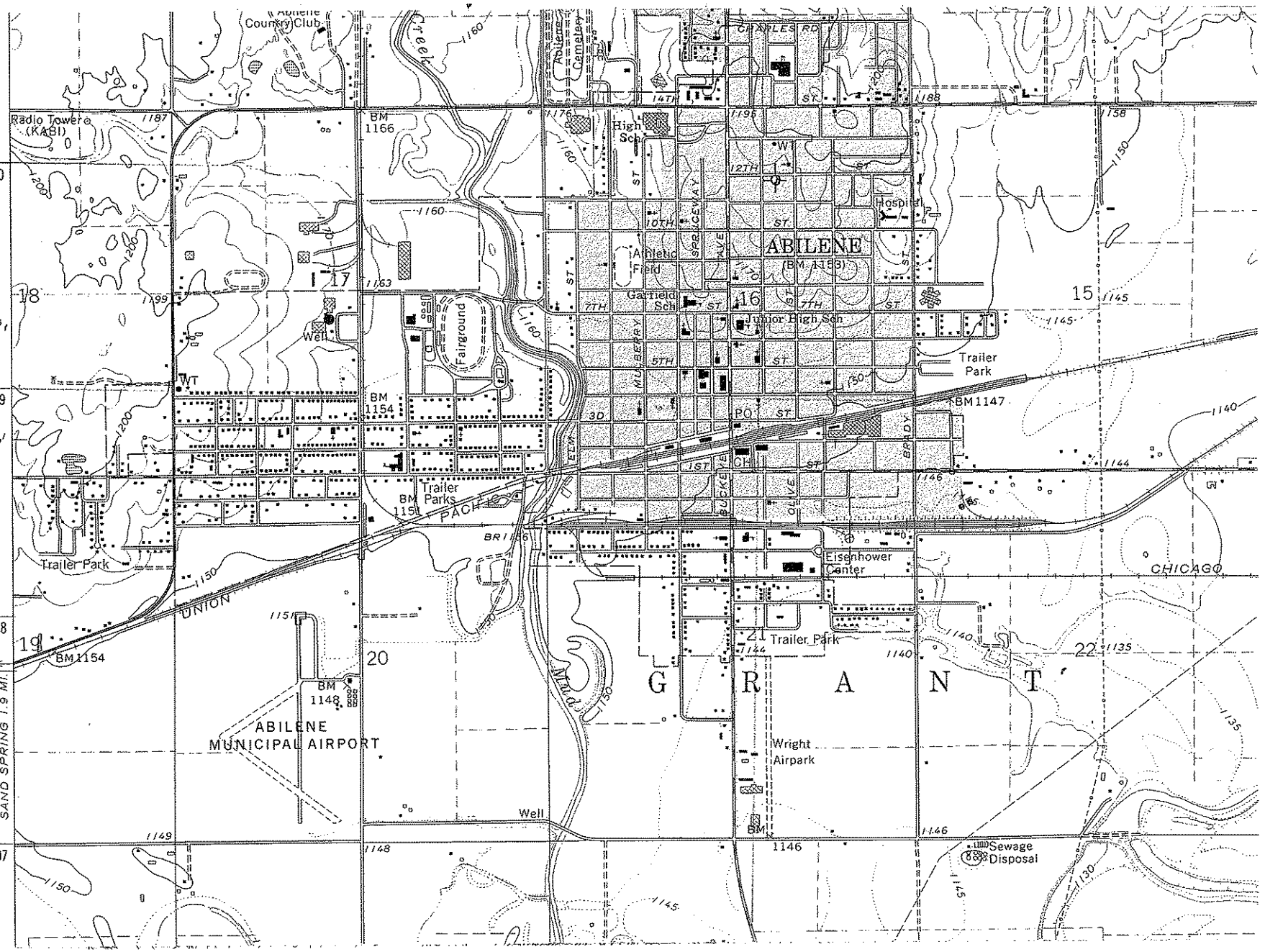
Photo 12: Interior, Master Bedroom, built-in vanity and closets, facing E

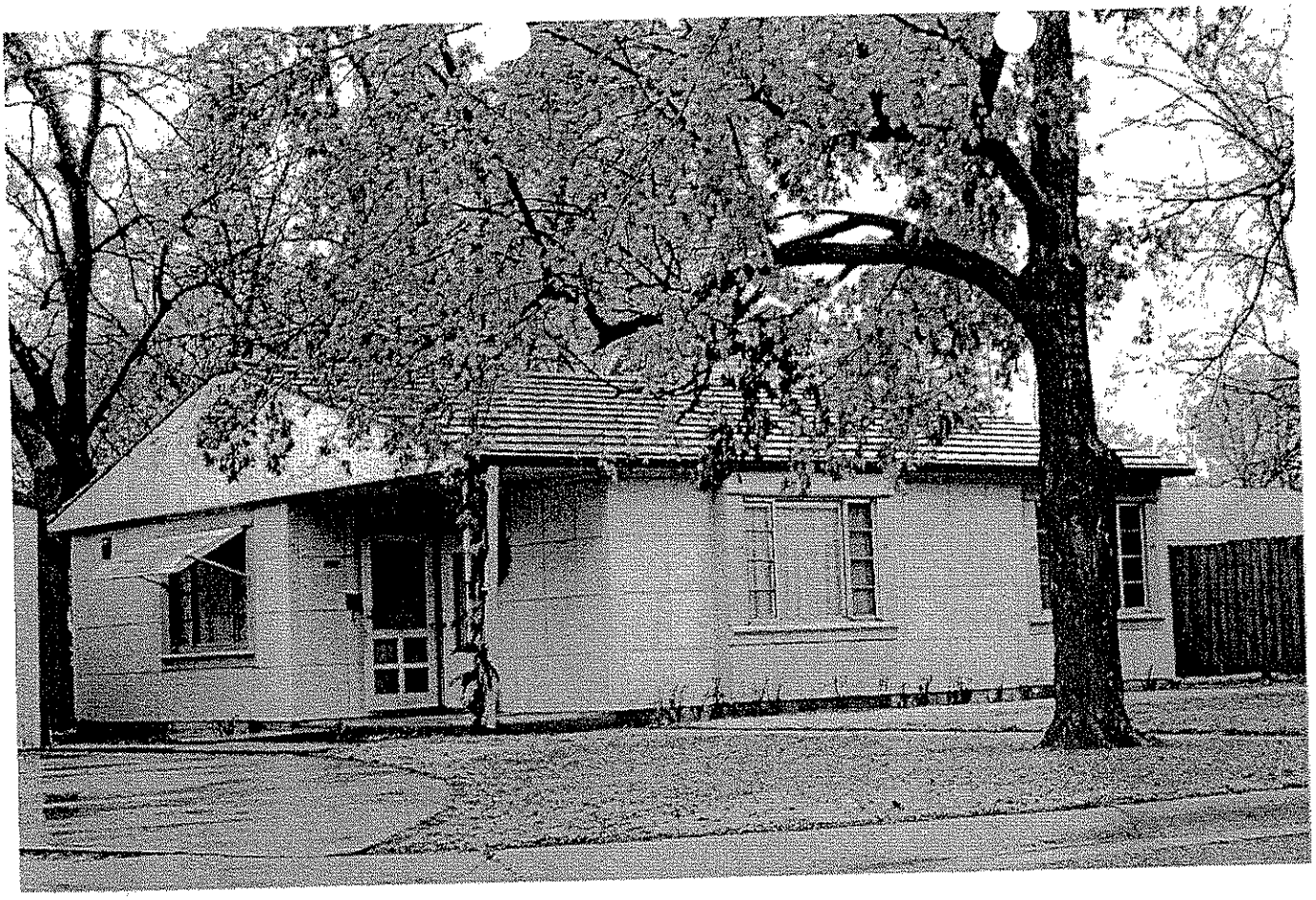
ABILENE QUAD

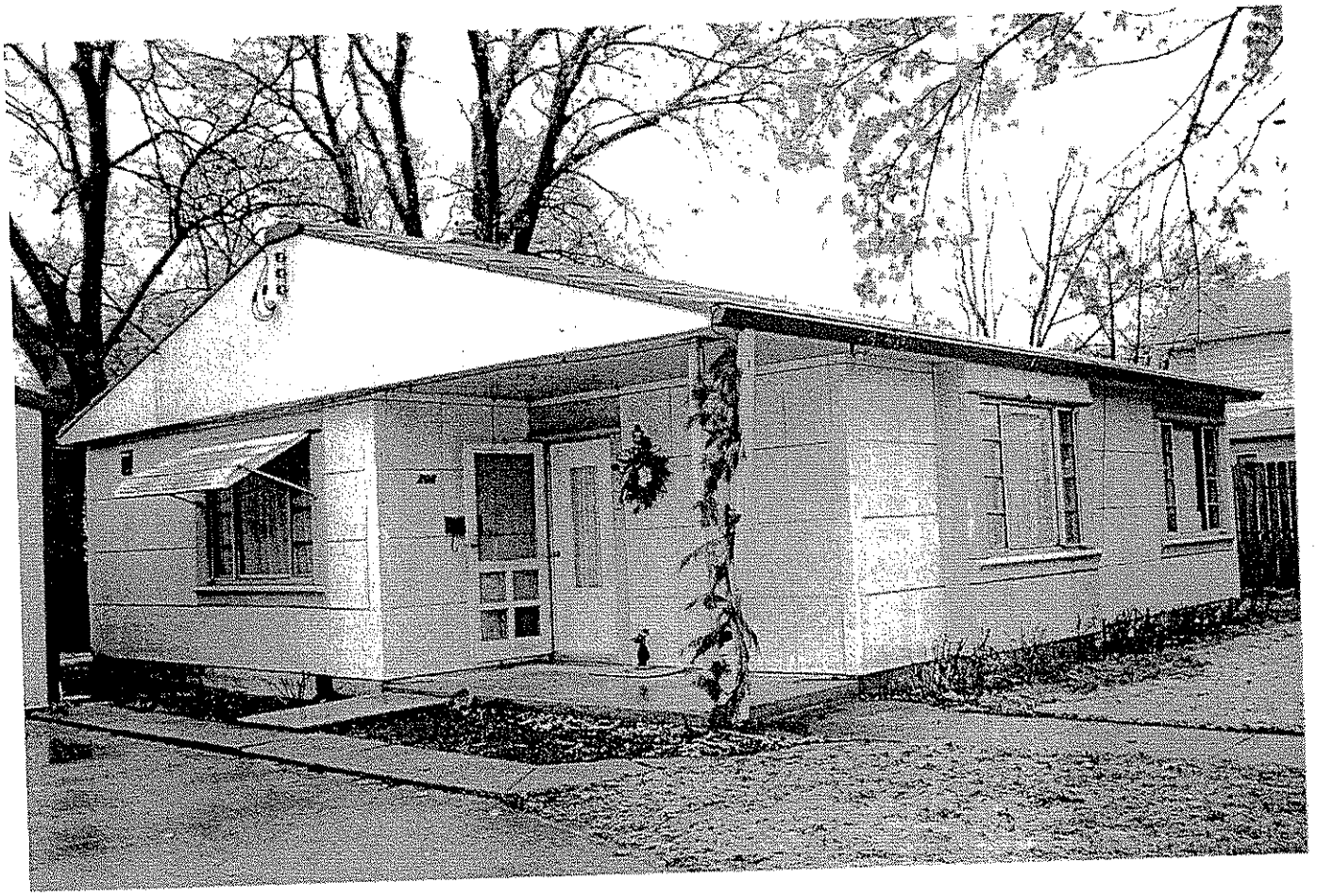
BERGER HOUSE

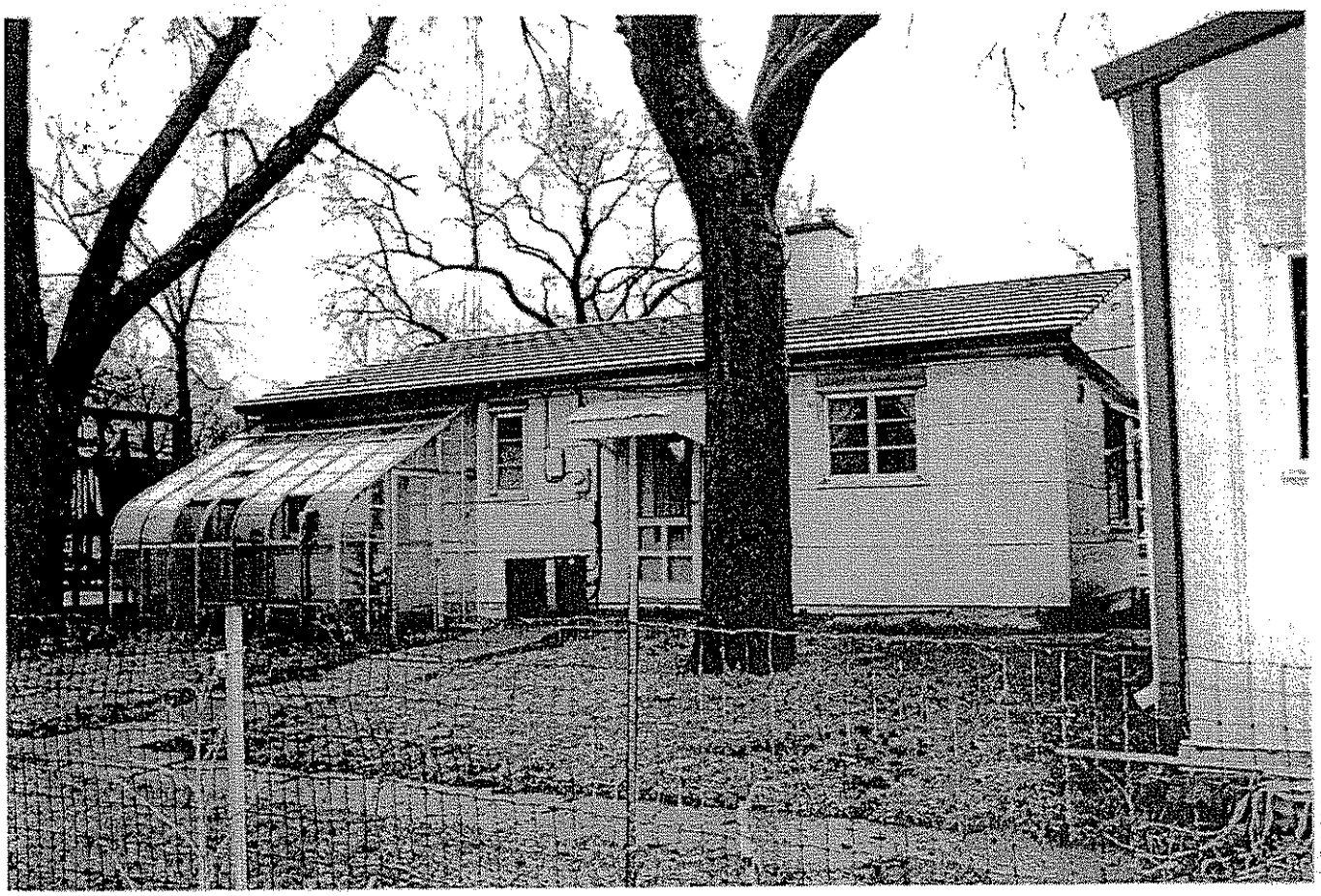
14: 655060 E
4309980 N

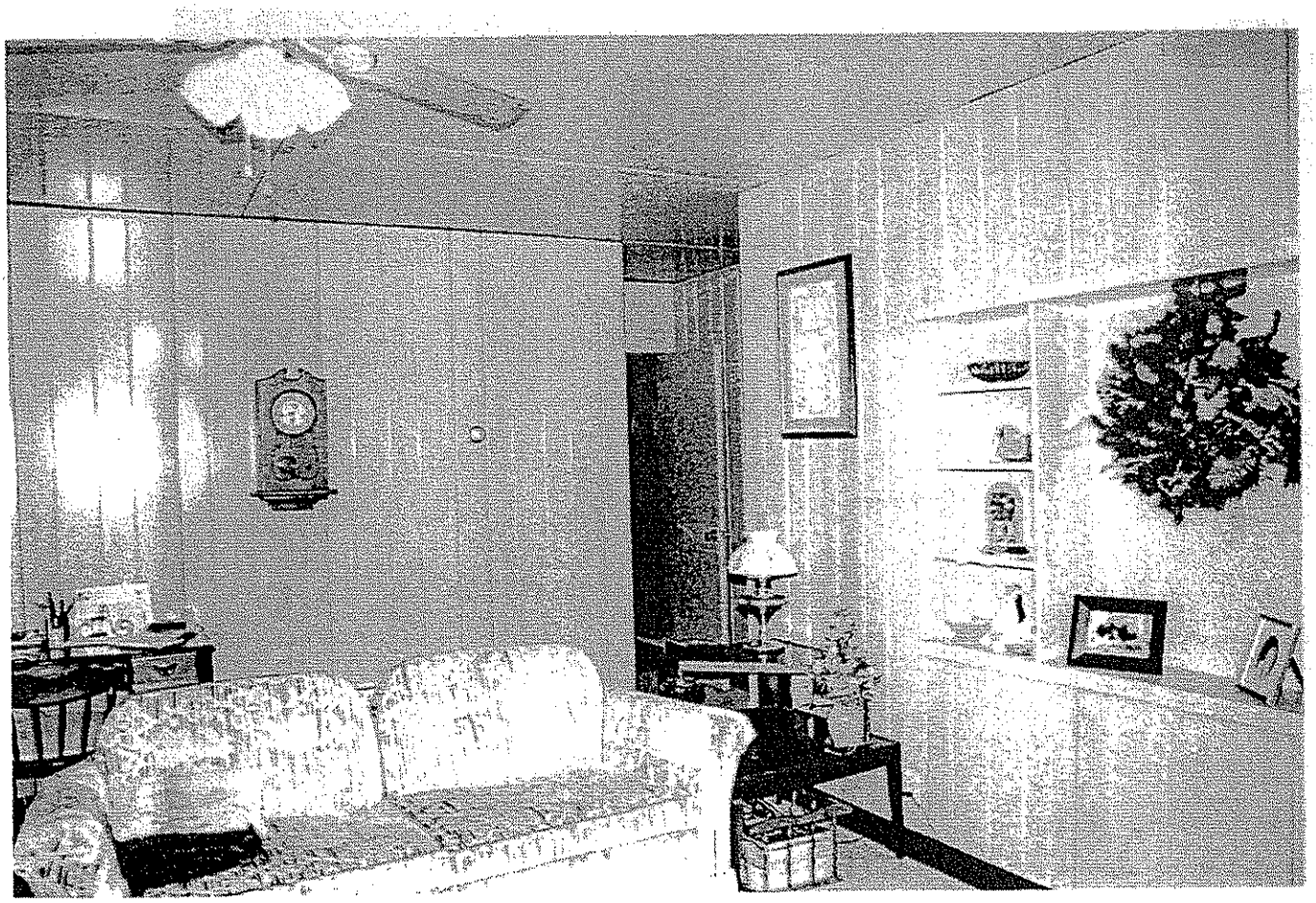
Abilene, Dickinson Co,
KANSAS

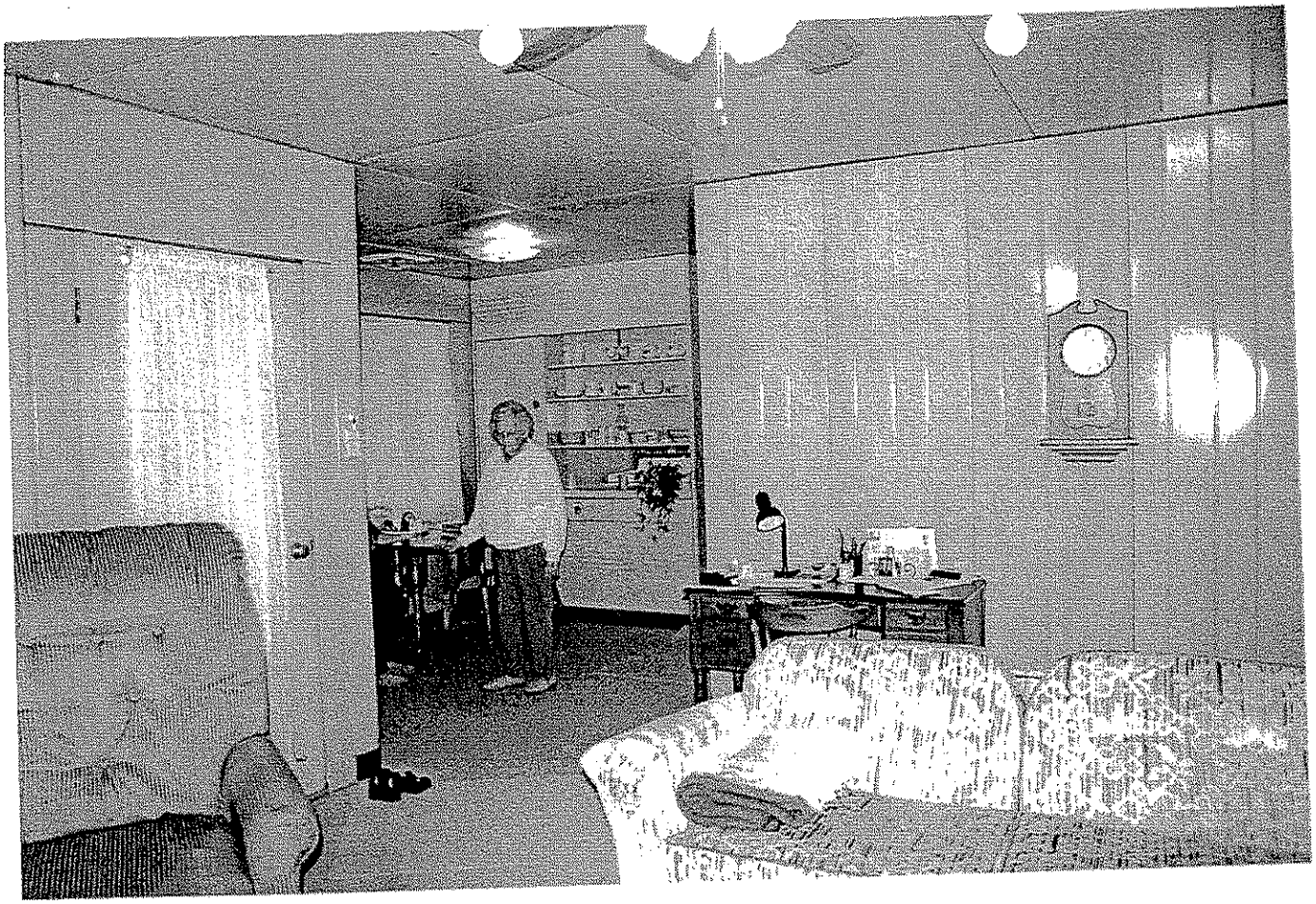


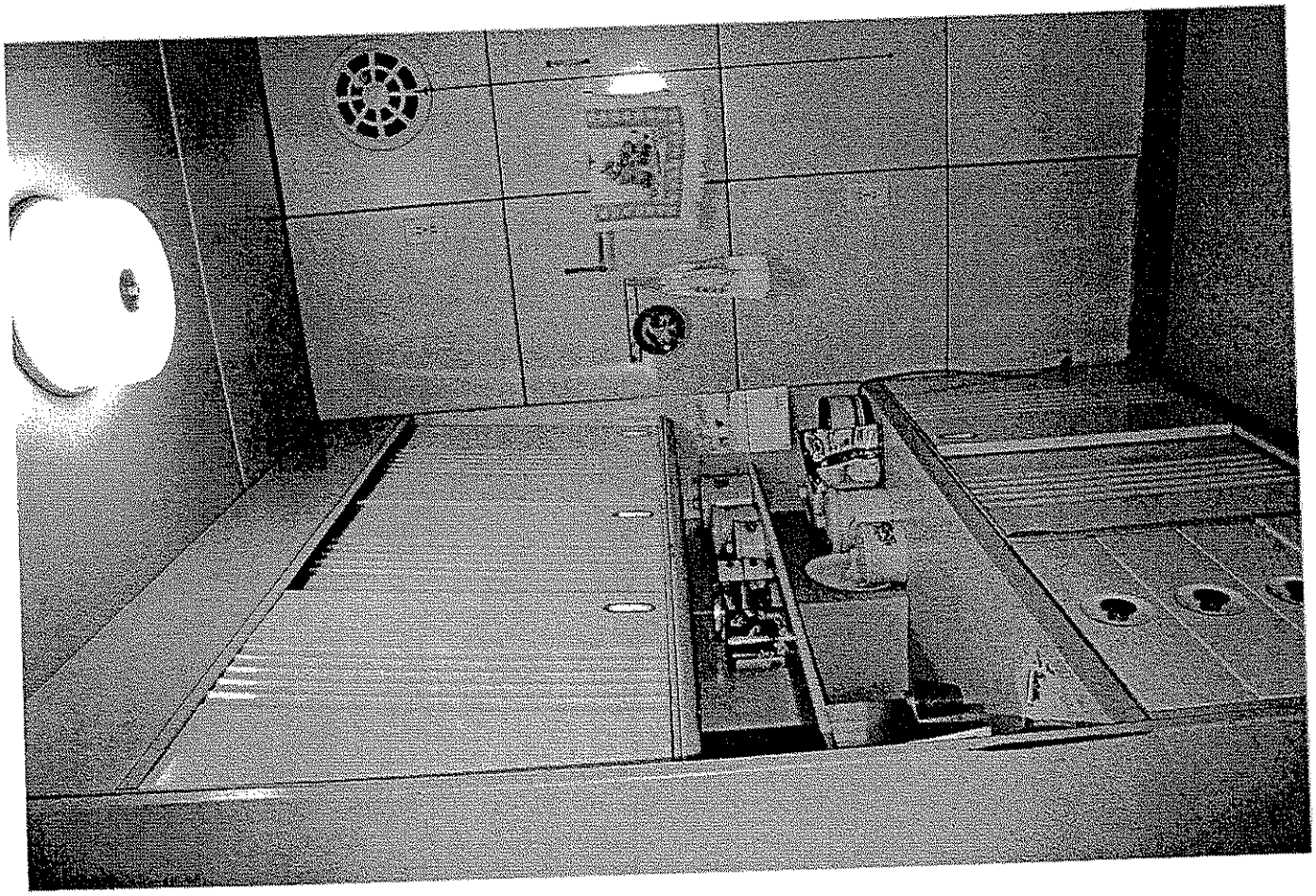




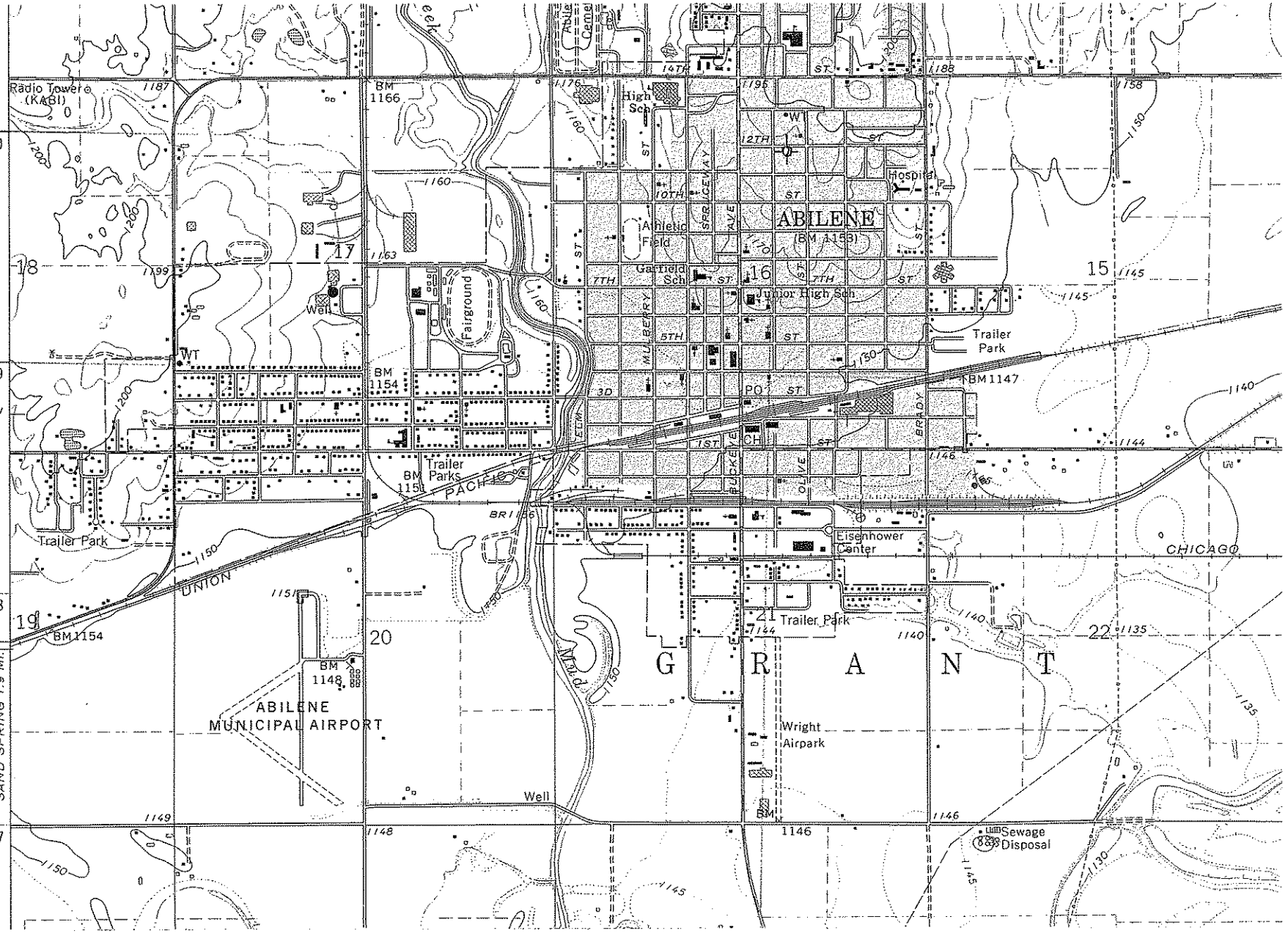








ABILENE QUAD

BERGER HOUSE

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4309980 N